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# MI5 officer to face 10 secrets charges

By Stewart Tendler, Crime Reporter

Ten espionage charge based on the Official Secrets Acts will be put to Mr Michael Bettaney, the MI5 officer arrested last year, when his trial begins at the Central Criminal Court next week.

Mr Bettaney, aged 34, of Coulsdon, Surrey, was arrested last September and committed for trial in December on six charges. Since then, the indictment has been revised for a trial which will be held almost entirely *in camera*.

As a result of the changes Mr Bettaney faces six charges under Section One of the 1911 Act. These allege that he passed information to a Soviet official on April 3 and June 12 last year; that he recorded information useful to an enemy on September 7 and 12 and between September 6 and 16; and that he collected information useful to

an enemy between December 21, 1982 and September 16 last year.

Mr Bettaney, a middle-ranking officer faces four charges relating to acts preparatory to communicating information. Two of these allege that on April 3 and June 12 last year he delivered letters to a Soviet official setting out precise arrangements for communicating classified information by the use of "dead letter boxes".

He is also alleged to have delivered a letter to a Soviet official on July 10 last year offering his services in supplying classified information and to have collected biographical details of Soviet officials in Vienna between April 3 and September 16 preparatory to communicating information.

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The charges will be read to Mr Bettaney when he appears in Court Number One before the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, on Tuesday. They will be outlined by Sir Michael Havers, the Attorney General, at the start of an opening speech, of which only a third will be heard in public.

The court has already decided to hear almost the entire case *in camera*. The proceedings will not be reopened until a verdict has been reached.

The jury is to be vetted but the Attorney General has told Mr Stuart Bell, Labour MP for Middlesbrough, that the vetting will not be based on political, peace movement or industrial grounds.